

Interviewed by Lapoint 6th grade class, April 1987

Transcribed by Janet Taylor, June 2001

Interviewer: I am going to be interviewing Ellen Palmer. She's fifty-nine. We're going to be talking about family hardships. It's May 7, 1987, and this is a history project for Mrs. Squires' sixth grade class from LaPoint Elementary.

Question: Will you describe the members of your family – like your sisters, brothers, and were you the youngest or the oldest?

Ellen Palmer (Ellen): I came from a family of ten children. There were five boys and five girls. I was the eighth one in the family and we had four cousins that lived with us, that my father and mother raised.

Question: What kind of experiences did you have as a little girl in school, hobbies, or chores?

Ellen: I started school when I was six years old. I lived out in the country and the school was right across the road from where I lived. It was one room with one teacher and eight grades.

Question: When your father died, when you were about six, how did your family get along, and how did it affect you, and what were some of your responsibilities?

Ellen: My oldest brother was twenty-four years old. I had one sister that was eighteen that had just gotten married, and they farmed, and we sold some property, and a couple of the boys worked out, away from home.

Question: Can you explain what caused your father's death?

Ellen: My father was putting up straw for a neighbor and some of my brothers and sisters were helping him, and they were stacking the straw up in a stack, and he slipped and fell from the stack and broke his neck. That caused his death.

Question: What were some of the hardships dealing with money, like food, bills, and taxes?

Ellen: I had one brother, my oldest brother, who was twenty-four years of age, got a job as a mechanic, and another brother that wasn't married—Father died when he was about twenty-two years old—he got a job on a farm in Idaho. One brother moved to Rupert, Idaho, and lived with cousins and worked there for his room and board. We raised a big garden.

Question: What were families like that would be considered to be better off?

Ellen: Families that had large farms and who farmed. Until Father died, we had a large farm and he built homes for people, and he built our house which was a two-room log cabin. He was a

carpenter and a farmer. Then after his death we gradually sold it down.

Question: What did you think “better off” was?

Ellen: People that owned a lot of ground and were big farmers, and who had dairies.

Question: What responsibilities did your family have that are hard compared to what technology has done for us today?

Ellen: Well, all the time I was growing up we never had a refrigerator. We had a well; we drew our water from the well, and we had a bucket that we would lower our butter and milk and that down into the well to keep it cool. We didn't have a refrigerator. We never had a washing machine, so the clothes were washed by hand or on a scrubbing board. We had a coal stove that could burn wood or coal, that we did our cooking on. We had electricity, but it was for lights.

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